

Celebrity politicians test voter interest in post-Trump era

By JILL COLVIN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — From Ronald Reagan and Arnold Schwarzenegger to Al Franken and Donald Trump, there's a rich history of celebrities trying out new careers in politics.

The list could soon grow.

In California, former Olympian Caitlyn Jenner is running for governor. In Texas, Oscar-winning actor Matthew McConaughey has said he is considering a run for governor. In New York City, Andrew Yang, a businessman who gained fame during his quixotic 2020 presidential run, is a leading contender for the Democratic mayoral nomination.

Each has the type of name recognition that other political newcomers would

envy. But as they consider running some of the nation's largest and most complicated governments, their lack of experience in public office could be a vulnerability. That's especially true after the tumult of the Trump era, when the reality television star-turned-president often spent more time raging about his media coverage than managing the federal bureaucracy.

"I do think it definitely makes it slightly harder," said Daniel Ketchell, who was chief of staff to Schwarzenegger, the bodybuilder-turned-Hollywood star who won a California recall election in 2003 and became a two-term governor.

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In this Jan. 18, 2020, file photo, Caitlyn Jenner speaks at the 4th Women's March in Los Angeles. Former Olympian Jenner is running for governor of California.

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Celebrity politicians test voter interest in post-Trump era

Continued from Front

"I think people are looking at you and that narrative of: We just elected an outsider celebrity and it didn't work out for the country, we didn't get much done for the country, we all were stressed out all the time."

Jenner, a gold medal-winning decathlete and transgender rights activists perhaps best known for being part of the Kardashian family, launched her campaign last week challenging Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom in his likely recall race. Bolstered by her 3.5 million Twitter followers and nearly 11 million on Instagram, the Jenner campaign believes that name recognition — will make her a strong competitor in a race they see as a referendum on Newsom's leadership.

But Rob Stutzman, a GOP consultant in the state who advised Schwarzenegger's winning recall campaign, said there are key differences between Jenner and Schwarzenegger, who was then arguably the big-



In this Feb. 29, 2020, file photo actor Matthew McConaughey attends A+E Network's "HISTORYTalks: Leadership and Legacy" in New York.

Associated Press

gest movie star in the world. "There's famous and then there's Arnold Schwarzenegger famous," he said, rejecting the idea that Trump had turned voters against celebrities.

"People will say they don't like celebrity candidates until there's a celebrity candidate they like," he said. "A lot of Democrats hated Donald Trump, but they might be pretty enthralled with Matthew McConaughey. ... It's still about winning and

likability." California has grown even more Democratic over the past 20 years, making it harder for a Republican, especially one who openly backed Trump, to gain traction. Schwarzenegger, strategists note, was already well known in the state as a champion of after-school programs, and had a history of civic engagement, having served as chair of President George H.W. Bush's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. It also

didn't hurt that he was married to Maria Shriver, a member of the Kennedy family dynasty.

Reagan was also well versed in politics before running a campaign of his own by virtue of leading the Screen Actors Guild. While Jenner has advocated for transgender people since coming out in 2015 and experience in the business world, it is unclear where she stands on a slew of other policy questions. Indeed, her current website offers only a vague 68-word statement, along with a fundraising portal and online store selling stemless wine glasses and yard signs. (Her campaign says policy plans are coming soon.)

She has already faced backlash after mistakenly suggesting in a tweet that district attorneys in the state were appointed, not elected. (She later said she knew that was the case.) "Also, do you know how a bill becomes a law?" quipped Rep. Ted Lieu, D-Calif., offering a link to the famous "Schoolhouse Rock" animation. "Do you know what 'veto' means? Or 'budget'?"

Celebrities-turned-politicians have long recognized the extra work they must do to counteract a dearth of governing experience. When Schwarzenegger ran, aides created what they called "Schwarzenegger University" to get up to speed on issues.

Franken, the "Saturday Night Live" star who later became a Democratic senator from Minnesota, largely avoided the national press during his first years in office as he tried to redefine himself as a serious lawmaker. Jesse Ventura, the professional wrestler who became Minnesota's governor, surrounded himself with experienced aides.

"No question that there was, I think, a preconceived notion that he might have some trouble engaging others to his administration," John Wodele, who served as Ventura's spokesman in office. "However, the actions that he

took right after the election to bring people into his administration with experience and knowledge and impeccable reputations quickly dispelled that."

Wodele added: "I think coming out of the wrestling environment and celebrity, a lot of people misjudged him in terms of his intellect. He was underestimated in terms of his ability to understand and reason."

In New York, Yang has ridden his losing presidential bid to a leading slot in the crowded mayoral race, which some of his rivals have sought to turn against him. In his first ad of the race, City Comptroller Scott Stringer, who has faced calls to drop out after a former volunteer accused him of sexual misconduct, stressed his experience in an implicit slap at Yang. "He's not a celebrity. He doesn't govern by Tweet or TikTok," the Stringer ad began.

Yang's campaign manager, Chris Coffey, rejected the characterization of the candidate as a celebrity, comparing Yang instead with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the Democratic congresswoman from New York who has become a household name because of her progressive politics.

"There's a pretty big difference between starting a reality show and starting a political movement based on raising people out of poverty and giving people cash," Coffey said of Yang. But star power, argued Democratic strategist Hank Sheinkopf, is what voters want.

"We live in a culture of gossip and entertainment. That's how Trump became president. That's one of the reasons why Yang is at the front of the pack," said Democratic strategist Hank Sheinkopf. He said that with New York having gone through so much during the pandemic, many voters may simply long for a smiling face and a cheerleader.

"The city, like other cities, is in the dumps," Sheinkopf said. "With his celebrity, he's interesting." □



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Wyoming backs coal with \$1.2M threat to sue other states

By MEAD GRUVER

Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) —

While most states pursue ways to boost renewable energy, Wyoming is doing the opposite with a new program aimed at propping up the dwindling coal industry by suing other states that block exports of Wyoming coal and cause Wyoming coal-fired power plants to shut down.

The law signed April 6 by Republican Gov. Mark Gordon creates a \$1.2 million fund for an initiative that marks the latest attempt by state leaders to help coal in the state that accounts for the bulk of U.S. coal production, which is down by half since 2008.

"Wyoming is sending a message that it is prepared to bring litigation to protect her interests," Gordon spokesman Michael Pearlman said of the fund signed into law April 6.

The law puts West Coast states and Colorado on notice — all seek to get a large share of their electricity from renewables but still get juice from aging Wyoming coal-fired power plants. The approach may run into legal troubles, though, according to one constitutional expert.

Lawsuits between states aren't unusual and often involve natural resources, such as water rights. Such cases can go directly to the U.S. Supreme Court, if the justices agree to hear them.

Last year, Wyoming and Montana — another major coal state — asked the Supreme Court to override a decision by Washington state to deny a permit to build a coal export dock on the Columbia River. The interstate lawsuit followed years of unsuccessful attempts by the dock's developer, Utah-based Lighthouse Resources, to contest the permit denial in federal court.

The Supreme Court hasn't said yet if it will hear the case but the new legal fund approved resoundingly by the Wyoming Legislature and overseen by Gordon could help cover



In this Nov. 29, 2006 file photo, steam rises from the huge boiler units at the Jim Bridger Power Plant, east of Rock Springs, Wyo.

Associated Press

the cost of that litigation, Pearlman said.

All the while, prospects for Wyoming's coal industry are as dim as ever, even after then-President Donald Trump rolled back regulations on mining and burning the fossil fuel.

Wyoming coal production, which accounts for about 40% of the nation's total, has been in decline as utilities switch to gas, which is cheaper to burn to generate electricity. Solar and wind power also are on the rise as coal's share of the U.S. power market shrinks from about half in the early 2000s to less than 20% now. Hope that other countries will use more U.S. coal, meanwhile, are fading fast. Lighthouse Resources filed for bankruptcy in December, further setting back the coal dock proposal.

So can state vs. state lawsuits help the coal industry? "We're supportive of all the efforts of the state right now to protect and defend the industry," Wyoming Mining

Association Executive Director Travis Deti said.

Wyoming could waste a lot of money trying to convince courts to help coal, countered University of Maryland environmental law professor Robert Percival.

"I don't think they have a legal leg to stand on," Percival said.

The Constitution's Commerce Clause prohibits states from barring goods and services based on their state of origin. States are free, however, to regulate or outright prohibit certain goods and services — coal and coal-fired electricity included — as long as they don't intentionally target other states, Percival said. Who might be targets of future Wyoming coal litigation isn't yet known. Pearlman declined to speculate, saying Gordon and Attorney General Bridget Hill would need to study their chances of success, but they could include West Coast states includ-

ing, again, Washington.

Portland, Oregon-based utility PacifiCorp plans to reduce its coal-fired generation by two-thirds by 2030, partly by retiring generators at two southwestern Wyoming power plants starting in 2023, as much as five years sooner than envisioned just a few years ago. The utility serves four states with renewable energy standards or goals — California, Oregon, Utah and Washington — and two that don't: Idaho and Wyoming.

PacifiCorp has been meeting renewable standards by getting electricity from the lowest cost and least risky sources like it has always done, so the standards haven't factored into its decisions to retire coal-fired power, company spokesman David Eskelsen said.

PacifiCorp has no position on the legal fund but the Wyoming Rural Electric Association supports the message it sends to states such

as Colorado, which has renewable energy standards and gets coal-fired electricity from southeastern Wyoming, Executive Director Shawn Taylor said.

"It's just kind of part and parcel of folks feeling that states and state agencies and entities outside Wyoming are having more of an impact on our energy resources than we do," Taylor said.

The coal litigation fund followed a 2020 bill that established a \$1 million fund to promote Wyoming coal. Wyoming is paying a non-profit, the Energy Policy Network, \$250,000 a year from the fund to contest plans in other states to shut down coal-fired power.

"I will not waver in my efforts to protect our industries, particularly our coal industry.

The use of coal is under assault from all directions. And we have stood firm in our support of it throughout," Gordon said in his state of the state address in March.

He called for Wyoming to be carbon negative — capturing more of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide than it emits — by investing in technology and infrastructure to trap carbon dioxide at power plants and keep the gas out of the atmosphere.

Carbon capture remains economically unproven on a scale needed to meaningfully reduce current carbon dioxide emissions. Wyoming has been funding research into the technology, however, including \$10 million in a just-approved bill that slashed Wyoming's budget by over 10% amid weak revenue from oil, gas and coal extraction.

Connie Wilbert, director of the Sierra Club's Wyoming chapter, said the state should put its tight budget to more productive use than coal lawsuits.

"Coal is on the way out," Wilbert said. "The sooner our elected leadership acknowledges that and starts looking for things the state can do to actually help us through the transition, the better." □

Police fatally shoot gunman who killed 2 at Wisconsin casino

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — Tribal leaders in northeastern Wisconsin were in shock Sunday hours after a gunman opened fire at their casino complex, killing two people and wounding another in what witnesses described as a hailstorm of bullets.

Brown County Sheriff's Lt. Kevin Pawlak said the shooting at the Oneida Casino in Green Bay on Saturday night didn't appear to be a random attack.

"He was targeting a specific victim who was not there, but he decided to still shoot some of the victim's friends or co-workers, it appears," Pawlak said at a news conference early Sunday. Police responding to the scene shot the gunman to death.

Oneida Chairman Tehassi Hill told WLUK-TV on Sunday that he was in "disbelief" and called the shooting "scary." He said the tribe prohibits firearms on its properties but that "(mass shootings are) kind of a regular thing in this country."

Authorities have not released the identities of the gunman or his victims. The wounded person was be-



The Oneida Casino lights glow in the parking lot in the early morning hours of Sunday, May 2nd, 2021, near Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Associated Press

ing treated at a Milwaukee hospital, Pawlak said.

The attack happened around 7:30 p.m. in the restaurant at the casino complex operated by the Oneida Nation, whose reservation is located on the western side of Green Bay about 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) from Lambeau Field, home of the Green Bay Packers. The complex includes a casino, conference center, hotel and restaurant.

Jawad Yatim, a witness, said he saw at least two people shot.

"I know for sure two, because it happened right

next to us, literally right next to us," Yatim said. "But he was shooting pretty aggressively in the building, so I wouldn't doubt him hitting other people. We got the hell out of there. Thank God we're OK, but obviously we wish the best for everybody who's been shot."

Pawlak, the sheriff's department lieutenant, wasn't sure if the shooter was a former restaurant employee but said "it appears there's some relationship that had to do with employment."

"Whether or not they all worked there, we're still working on," he said.

Gambler Max Westphal

said he was standing outside after being evacuated from the building for what he thought was a minor issue.

"All of a sudden we hear a massive flurry of gunshots — 20 to 30 gunshots for sure," Westphal told WBAY-TV. "We took off running towards the highway. ... There had to have been 50 cop cars that came by on the highway. It was honestly insane."

Pawlak said authorities called for a "tactical alert" after receiving the report of an active shooter. That "brings every agency from around the area to the casino, to the Radisson," he said of the large law enforcement presence.

Hill, the tribal chairman, told WLUK-TV that he feels security is tight in the casino but that the tribe may have to consider tougher protocols for the complex depending on investigators' findings.

Packers head coach Matt LaFleur tweeted condolences Sunday to everyone affected by the shooting. "We have the smallest and closest community in professional sports," LaFleur said. "It's unfortunate any-

time events like this occur & sad when it hits so close to home."

Gov. Tony Evers issued a statement late Saturday saying he was "devastated" to hear about the shooting. "Our hearts, thoughts, and support go out to the Oneida Nation, the Ashwaubenon and Green Bay communities, and all those affected by this tragedy."

Evers, a Democrat, called a special legislative session on gun control in the fall of 2019. He proposed a so-called "red flag" law that would have allowed judges to take guns away from people deemed to be a danger, and a bill requiring a background check for almost all gun purchases. Republicans who control the Legislature refused to consider either measure.

Sen. Rob Cowles, a Republican who represents the Green Bay area, issued a statement saying the community has suffered a "traumatic event."

"My heart goes out to those impacted by the shooting, to the Oneida Nation and to all of Northeast Wisconsin as we continue coping with this senseless violence," he said. □

2 killed, 23 hurt when boat capsizes off San Diego coast



A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter flies over boats searching the area where a boat capsized just off the San Diego coast Sunday, May 2, 2021, in San Diego.

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Two people were killed and nearly two dozen others were hospitalized after a wooden boat capsized Sunday during a possible human smuggling opera-

tion just off the San Diego coast, authorities said. Local lifeguards, the U.S. Coast Guard and other agencies responded around 10:30 a.m. following reports of an overturned

vessel near the peninsula of Point Loma, according to the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.

Two patients died at the scene and 23 people were transported to hospitals with "varying degrees of injuries," department spokesman Jose Ysea said.

Ysea said when he arrived on scene near the Cabrillo National Monument there was a "large debris field" of broken wood and other items in the choppy waters. "In that area of Point Loma it's very rocky. It's likely the waves just kept pounding the boat, breaking it apart," Ysea said.

He said it was possible, but not confirmed, that the group had been packed in a low-slung panga boat, a type of small motorized vessel often made of wood

used by smugglers to bring people illegally into the U.S. from Mexico.

Officials believed everyone on board was accounted for, but crews in boats and aircraft continued to search the area for other possible survivors, Ysea said. U.S. Border Patrol didn't immediately respond to inquiries about the capsizing. A news conference was scheduled for Sunday afternoon. Border Patrol often spots pangas off the San Diego coast, many of them crowded with about 20 passengers. Some boats have landed hundreds of miles north of the border.

Deaths are unusual but not unprecedented. On Thursday, border officials intercepted a panga type vessel traveling without navigation lights 11

miles (18 kilometers) off the coast of Point Loma with 21 people on board. The crew took all 15 men and six women into custody. Agents determined all were Mexican citizens with no legal status to enter the U.S., according to a statement released by Customs and Border Protection. Two of the people on the boat, the suspected smugglers, will face federal charges, it said.

Border Patrol on Friday said law enforcement officials would be ramping up operations to disrupt maritime smuggling off the coast of San Diego this weekend.

As warmer weather comes to San Diego, there is a misperception that it will make illegal crossings safer or easier, the agency said in a statement. □

U.S. denies Iran claims of prisoner deal; UK plays it down

By JON GAMBRELL, ISABEL DEBRE AND MATTHEW LEE

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The United States on Sunday immediately denied a report by Iranian state-run television that deals had been reached for the Islamic Republic to release U.S. and British prisoners in exchange for Tehran receiving billions of dollars.

It wasn't immediately clear if the report represented a move by the hard-liners running the Iranian broadcaster to disrupt negotiations with the West amid talks in Vienna on Tehran's tattered nuclear deal.

It also wasn't known if there had been any ongoing negotiations with the West over frozen funds and prisoner exchanges, both of which accompanied the 2015 atomic accord.

Even after an initial American denial, an anchorwoman on Iranian state TV still repeated the announcement.

"Some sources say four Iranian prisoners are to be released and \$7 billion are to be received by Iran in exchange for releasing four American spies," the anchorwoman said. She described the claimed deal as coming due to congressional pressure on President Joe Biden and "his urgent need to show progress made in the Iran case."

But Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Majid Takht-e Ravanchi, later denied the report of the prisoner swap, saying that it's "not confirmed," according to the Telegram channel of state-run IRNA news agency.

"Iran has always emphasized the comprehensive exchange of prisoners between the two countries," he said, without elaborating.

State TV did not identify the Iranians that Tehran sought to be freed.

State Department spokesman Ned Price immediately denied the Iranian state TV report.

"Reports that a prisoner swap deal has been reached are not true," Price



In this Jan. 26, 2021, file photo released by the Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif listens during the talks in Moscow, Russia.

Associated Press

said. "As we have said, we always raise the cases of Americans detained or missing in Iran. We will not stop until we are able to reunite them with their families."

Biden's chief of staff Ron Klain told CBS' "Face the Nation" that "unfortunately, that report is untrue. There is no agreement to release these four Americans."

"We're working very hard to get them released," Klain said. "We raise this with Iran and our interlocutors all the time, but so far there's no agreement."

Tehran holds four known Americans now in prison: Baquer and Siamak Namazi, environmentalist Morad Tahbaz and Iranian-American businessman Emad Shargi. Iran long has been accused of holding those with Western ties prisoners to be later used as bargaining chips in negotiations.

Despite the American denials, there have been signs that a deal on prisoners may be in the works based on Iranian officials' remarks in recent weeks.

Although no formal proposal for a swap has yet been presented to officials in Washington, let alone been signed off on by the White House, the specificity of the reports from Iran suggested that working-level

consideration of a deal is at least underway.

State TV also quoted sources as saying a deal had been reached for the United Kingdom to pay 400 million pounds (\$552 million) to see the release of British-Iranian woman Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe.

British officials played down the report. The Foreign Office said the country continues "to explore options to resolve this 40-year-old case and we will not comment further as legal discussions are ongoing."

Aside from Zaghari-Ratcliffe's case, the U.K. and Iran also are negotiating a British debt to Tehran from before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Last week, Zaghari-Ratcliffe was sentenced to an additional year in prison, her lawyer said, on charges of spreading "propaganda against the system" for participating in a protest in front of the Iranian Embassy in London in 2009.

That came after she completed a five-year prison

sentence in the Islamic Republic after being convicted of plotting the overthrow of Iran's government, a charge that she, her supporters and rights groups deny.

While employed at the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of the news agency, she was taken into custody at the Tehran airport in April 2016 as she was returning home to Britain after visiting family.

Richard Ratcliffe, the husband of Zaghari-Ratcliffe, told The Associated Press he was not aware of any swap in the works.

"We haven't heard anything," he said. "Of course, we probably wouldn't, but my instinct is to be skeptical at present."

Earlier Sunday, U.K. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab told the BBC that he believed Zaghari-Ratcliffe was being held "unlawfully" by Iran. "I think she's been treated in the most abusive, tortuous way," Raab said. "I think it amounts to

torture the way she's been treated and there is a very clear, unequivocal obligation on the Iranians to release her and all of those who are being held as leverage immediately and without condition."

The announcement by state TV comes amid a wider power struggle between hard-liners and the relatively moderate government of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. That conflict only has grown sharper as Iran approaches its June 18 presidential election.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who pushed for the 2015 nuclear deal under Rouhani, has seen himself embroiled in a scandal over frank comments he made in a leaked recording. Zarif's name has been floated as a possible candidate in the election, something that now seems unlikely as even Iran's supreme leader has apparently criticized him.

Tehran is now negotiating with world powers over both it and the U.S. returning to the nuclear deal, which saw it limit its uranium enrichment in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. Iran has not held direct negotiations with the U.S. during the talks, however.

As the negotiations continue, Iranian diplomats there have offered encouraging comments, while state TV quoted anonymous sources striking maximalist positions contradicting them. That even saw Abbas Araghchi, the Iranian deputy foreign minister leading the talks, offer a rebuke on Twitter last week to Iranian state television's English-language arm, Press TV.

"I don't know who the 'informed source' of Press TV in Vienna is, but s/he is certainly not 'informed,'" Araghchi wrote. □

N.Korea warns U.S. of 'very grave situation' over Biden speech

By HYUNG-JIN KIM

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

— North Korea on Sunday warned that the United States will face "a very grave situation" and alleged that President Joe Biden "made a big blunder" in his recent speech by calling the North a security threat.

Last week, Biden, in his first address to Congress, called North Korea and Iran's nuclear programs "serious threats" to American and world security and said he'll work with allies to address those problems through diplomacy and stern deterrence.

"His statement clearly reflects his intent to keep enforcing the hostile policy toward the DPRK as it had been done by the U.S. for over half a century," Kwon Jong Gun, a senior North Korean Foreign Ministry official, said in a statement. DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the North's official name.

"It is certain that the U.S. chief executive made a big blunder in the light of the present-day viewpoint," Kwon said. "Now that the keynote of the U.S. new



Participants hold notices during a ceremony to mark the third anniversary of Panmunjom declaration between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un near the border village of Panmunjom that separates the two Koreas since the Korean War, in Paju, South Korea, Tuesday, April 27, 2021. The signs read "The implementation of Panmunjom declaration and resumption of Inter-Korean cooperation."

Associated Press

DPRK policy has become clear, we will be compelled to press for corresponding measures, and with time the U.S. will find itself in a very grave situation."

Kwon still didn't specify what steps North Korea would take, and his statement could be seen as an effort to apply pressure on

the Biden administration as it's shaping up its North Korea policy.

Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said Sunday that U.S. policy is "not aimed at hostility, it's aimed at solutions" and at "ultimately achieving the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

"And we're prepared to engage in diplomacy towards that ultimate objective, but work on practical measures that can help us make progress along the way towards that goal," Sullivan said on ABC's "This Week."

The White House said Friday administration officials had

completed a review of U.S. policy toward North Korea, saying Biden plans to veer from the approaches of his two most recent predecessors as he tries to stop North Korea's nuclear program. Press secretary Jen Psaki did not detail findings of the review, but suggested the administration would seek a middle ground between Donald Trump's "grand bargain" and Barack Obama's "strategic patience" approaches.

Kwon's statement didn't mention Psaki's comments. After a series of high-profile nuclear and missile tests in 2016-17, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un launched summit diplomacy with Trump on the future of his growing nuclear arsenal. But that diplomacy remains stalled for about two years over differences in how much sanctions relief North Korea could win in return for limited denuclearization steps.

"We regard the maneuvers committed by the human waste in the South as a serious provocation against our state and will look into corresponding action," Kim Yo Jong said in a statement. □

U.S. Army warmly welcomed ahead of NATO exercises in Albania



U.S. army vehicles disembark from a vessel at Albania's main port of Durres, Saturday, May 1, 2021.

Associated Press

By LLAZAR SEMINI

Associated Press

DURRES, Albania (AP) — Albania's main port of Durres has welcomed a huge influx of containers and big trucks this week ahead of NATO exercises, a concen-

tration of military vehicles that U.S. officials said has not been seen in the Adriatic nation since World War II.

Some 700 pieces of equipment from the Florida National Guard's 53rd Infan-

try Brigade Combat Team were being discharged from the USNS Bob Hope at Durres, 33 kilometers (20 miles) west of the capital, Tirana. They will be used for two weeks of training involving up to 6,000 U.S. troops at six Albanian military bases.

It's part of the US Army-led Defender-Europe 21 multinational military exercises, which are focused on deterring aggression and building operational readiness with NATO and a greater number of allies and partners. They run from May 17 to June 2.

"Albania is a valued partner. Our militaries benefit by training together, enhancing interoperability, building operation readiness and strengthening relationships — all of which enable our ability to respond to

any crisis, anytime, together with our allies and partners," Tammy Muckenfuss of the U.S. Army for Europe and Africa, based in Germany, said Saturday.

To Maj. Randall Moran, "bringing all these groups together is something very unique."

Divers were still checking the port's 7-meter (23-foot) deep draft. But the two logistic support vessels transporting the vehicles can operate in shallow water and were working non-stop to bring in the military equipment.

A British military vessel will also arrive in the next few days.

Defender-Europe this year has involved around 28,000 U.S., allied and partner forces from 27 nations to conduct simultaneous operations across more than

30 training areas in more than a dozen nations, from the Baltics and Africa to the Black Sea and the Balkans. Besides offering six naval, land and air bases, Albania, a NATO member since 2009, will commit 1,000 troops to what Defense Minister Niko Peleshi called "a historic event because it is the biggest exercise in Albania and the region."

U.S. military officials praised Albania's welcome, good food and natural beauty.

Muckenfuss said "Albania has been an amazing host and have greeted all of our soldiers with warmth."

"It's a great choice for the exercise," Moran said. "I think you guys are coming up more or less like a hidden gem. So that the people are great, the food's wonderful and the views are magnificent." □

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Puerto Rico groans under pandemic as health, economy suffer

By DÁNICA COTO

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— Puerto Rico seemed to be sprinting toward herd immunity this spring before people began letting their guard down against COVID-19 and new variants started spreading across the U.S. territory.

Now, a spike in cases and hospitalizations has put medical experts at odds with the government, which is struggling to protect people's health while also trying to prevent an economic implosion on an island battered by hurricanes, earthquakes and a prolonged financial crisis. "The difficulty here is how do you find a Solomonic decision ... to give people the opportunity to work and be responsible and also maintain health as a priority," said Ramón Leal, former president of Puerto Rico's Restaurant Association. "These are hard conversations."

It's a delicate balance for an island that imposed a



In this March 10, 2021 file photo, people stand in line outside the Maria Simmons elementary school waiting to be inoculated with the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine as part of a mass vaccination campaign, in Vieques, Puerto Rico.

Associated Press

lockdown and mask mandates ahead of any U.S. state and has some of the strictest entry requirements of any American jurisdiction — measures that helped contain infections

before the latest surge. Overall, the land of 3.3 million people has reported more than 115,000 confirmed coronavirus cases, over 115,000 suspected ones and more than 2,000

deaths, with transmission rates inching up the last week of April to 28 cases per 100,000 people a day, compared with 17 per 100,000 on the U.S. mainland.

The pandemic has unleashed the second-biggest economic drop Puerto Rico has seen since record-keeping began in 1980, according to José Caraballo, a Puerto Rico economist. The biggest was caused by Hurricane Maria, which inflicted more than \$100 billion in damage in 2017, with nearly 3,000 people dying in its sweltering aftermath. More than 30,000 jobs have been lost because of the COVID-19 outbreak, and at least 1,400 businesses have closed, Caraballo said — this on an island that saw nearly 12% of its population flee in the past decade and whose government is struggling with crushing debt that led it to file for the biggest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history in 2017.

"I'm taken aback by what

the people of Puerto Rico have had to endure," Caraballo said.

Many of those who remain are mourning over lost homes, jobs, businesses or loved ones. □

U.S. expresses concern over El Salvador vote to remove judges

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP)

— The United States said Sunday that it is concerned over a vote by El Salvador's new congress to remove the magistrates of the constitutional chamber of the Supreme Court. U.S. Secretary of State Anthony J. Blinken spoke to Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele about the vote on Saturday, "noting that an independent judiciary is essential to democratic governance," the State Department said.

Blinken also expressed concern about the removal of Attorney General Raúl Melara, saying he is fighting corruption and is "an ef-

fective partner of efforts to combat crime in both the United States and El Salvador," State Department spokesman Ned Price said. Blinken said the U.S. is committed to supporting democratic institutions in El Salvador.

In a statement, the general secretariat of the Organization of American States also criticized the dismissal of the magistrates and the attorney general in El Salvador.

El Salvador's assembly voted 64 to 19 with one abstention to oust the five magistrates in the chamber, which had angered Bukele by ruling against

some of his tougher measures during the pandemic. Ruling party lawmakers defended the decision, saying the court had put private interests above the health and welfare of the people, while the opposition called it a power grab by a president seeking total control.

El Salvador's constitution states that the magistrates of the Supreme Court of Justice may be removed by the Legislative Assembly for specific causes established by law. Both the election and dismissal of its magistrates must have the support of two thirds of the lawmakers.

Bukele's New Ideas party



New members of the New Ideas party are sworn in during the Legislative Assembly in San Salvador, El Salvador, Saturday, May 1, 2021.

Associated Press

swept Feb. 28 legislative elections by a landslide last month, devastating the

two traditional parties that had long ruled the Central American nation. □

MedCare's Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Centers: Just introduced a game changer: Rapid PCR, minutes not hours to get your results.

PALM BEACH — MedCare's Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Center is your best option for the post vacation COVID-19 test which is now required by the U.S. before returning home. All passengers going to the United States, including U.S. citizens, are required to have a negative (antigen or PCR) COVID-19 test result of a test taken maximum three days prior to boarding the flight, or documentation of recovery from COVID-19. MedCare's testing centers in and close to the hotels provide you with an easy and secure solution.

MedCare Clinic, a high-quality medical clinic that is specialized in urgent care for tourists and that has been appointed as the national COVID-19 clinic for tourists, and Laboratorio di Servicio, a full-service modern medical laboratory with state-of-the-art equipment, have partnered up to provide fast and reliable COVID-19 testing to all. Laboratorio di Servicio is ISO-15189:2012 accredited by the Dutch Council for Accreditation (M317).

Rapid PCR

As Aruba resumes to receive more and more visitors each month, one thing has become very clear: testing is critical. Thus far Medcare Clinic has been offering high-volume laboratory testing with results in 24 hours or less. The newest service on the market is Rapid PCR, where you receive your results in minutes not hours.

Just steps away from you

The Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Centers are located at the Cove Mall and at the Courtyard Aruba Resort at the mill, two locations at a stone's throw from your resort, condominium, or other vacation accommodation.. Walk-ins are welcome. It is recommended that the tests are done timely, as the negative test is only accepted if taken up to three days before boarding your flight. MedCare Fit2Fly Testing Center at the Cove Mall is opposite the Holiday Inn and is open every day for walk-ins from 8am through 10pm. MedCare's other location is situated at The Courtyard Aruba Resort, is across the street from the RIU Hotel and is open every day from 8:30am until 12:30pm.



At your hotel

For a selection of hotels/resorts in Aruba, MedCare has setup Testing Centers on site. The hotels/resorts at which we have a testing site are: Divi All Inclusive, Divi Dutch Village, Divi Golf, Divi Phoenix, Divi Tamarind, Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort, Hyatt Regency, Renaissance, and the Ritz-Carlton Resort. Please contact your front desk for more information on our Testing Centers at these properties.



Costs and timing

Passengers must be tested with a viral test that could be either an Antigen Test or a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), such as the reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (PCR). The price for the Antigen Test is only \$50, and the PCR Test is available, for \$125. The new rapid PCR will be \$150 (results in 30 minutes.) MedCare offers the easier and substantially cheaper Antigen Test that is acceptable for travel to the U.S. as per the CDC guidelines. Pre-travel testing is not covered by the Aruban visitor insurance. Please contact your insurance company to verify if testing costs are insured. Results are e-mailed to you within 24 hours of testing.

Private bookings

For your convenience, Medcare also offers private testing at your accommodation/hotel room for a one-time service fee of \$120. This fee covers testing up to 10 people (one appointment, at one location and a specific time). Additional persons will be charged \$10 per person. □

To book your test in advance, please contact:

Phone: +297 280 0630

Email: info@medcare.aw

For more information on MedCare Testing Centers:

<https://medcare.aw/en/covid-19-testing>



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Bohemian Bar & Restaurant presents: Five course tasting menu by Philippe Colin, Michelin star chef from France

PALM BEACH — If you do not know Bohemian Bar & Restaurant yet, you will have the chance to do this tomorrow in its best performance. French Michelin star chef Philippe Colin is specially invited to Aruba to create culinary heights with a five course tasting menu presenting the ultimate French cuisine art, a unique opportunity and with limited seating. For an amazing offer (\$ 95 per person including three wines) Bohemian Bar & Restaurant will make sure you remember this night on Aruba forever. Make sure you are part of Colin's gastronomic magic in the ambiance of the hippest and most stylish place on the island!



Bohemian's owners are French, as we all know the center of the culinary world in Europe. They elevate the gastronomy on the island with their restaurant and top it especially now with guest chef Colin. The laid-back restaurant with its unique secret-garden charm, is located on the corner of Barceló Resort in the center of the hi-rise frenzy. Lounge music fills the air as waiters, wearing cool suspenders and berets, serve your dinner and drinks. Bohemian is hip, stylish and delicious.

For Colin it is his first time on Aruba and he loves it. The chef has a long successful career and owned several restaurants in France among others in Paris and the Côte d'Azur. He travels the world as a culinary consultant and private chef. "Since I was little the passion for cooking was in my blood. I come from Reims, the champagne region and started working in the gastronomy world of Paris from a young age." Colin used to be the private chef of France's former president, Jacques Chirac and he had the honor to work with three Michelin star chef Frédéric Girardet in Lausanne, Switzerland. In 1995 Colin earned his very own Michelin star. "It is the best, the

highest ranking you can have in the culinary world." For this special night in Bohemian he will enchant the guests with French flair and flavors to remember.

To get the taste of it, we share last week's menu, rated five stars by the guests. The night jumped off with Roasted leek and tangy iodized mango and pineapple cream followed by Poached oyster in seawater jelly, crème fraîche, shallots and caviar. The journey of delight continued with Shrimp ballotine with lobster crème and stuffed zucchini and the main course made an impressive entrance with a Duo of lamb roasted and Sheppard's pie flambé with thyme tangy blueberry coulis and sautéed garden fresh mini greens. It was a sweet and delicious good-



bye with the dessert of Chestnut mousse on almond tile, pineapple brunoise with lime zest and home-made ginger ice cream. Can you really resist any of this?

Chef Colin and Bohemian will be welcoming you with open arms and you will have the opportunity

to have a chat with the chef as he loves to connect with his guests. "The kitchen is my passion, but the satisfaction of the guests is my love."

Enter through the huge, wooden door leading you into a foodies Garden of Eden. Welcome to Bohemian! □



Free Parking available at the parking lot of Barceló Resort. Make your reservations through the website: <https://bohemianaruba.com> or call + 297 280 8448. Facebook: Bohemian.

Bohemian
BAR AND RESTAURANT

Covid-19: the status on Aruba



ORANJESTAD —Rules and protocols are being reviewed and evaluated on a daily basis and adapted as per current situation by a crisis team, in order to protect each and every one visiting and residing our island.

Current numbers

There are currently 151 active Covid cases on the island, 113 residents and 38 non-residents. There are 21 persons hospitalized of

which 9 of them are in the Intensive care unit. 100 persons lost their battle against the Covid virus of which 1 of them is a non-resident. A total of 149.597 persons have been tested of which 100.715 were tested at the airport.

Vaccines

Aruba received already 5 batches of the Pfizer vaccine courtesy of the Dutch Kingdom. A total of 59.000 persons registered for the

vaccine. There has been a total of 75.497 vaccines applied of which 32.533 already received the first dosage and 21.482 received the second dosage of Pfizer vaccine. Per day a total of 2.500 persons are being vaccine at two locations, Centro Deportivo Betico Croes in Santa Cruz, and Theresita Center in San Nicolas. We are aiming on having 85% of the total population vaccinated by June 2021. When vaccinat-

ed you still need to adhere to all rules and protocols. Wear your facial mask, practice social distance, and maintain hygiene. The vaccine is not mandatory but, taking the vaccine is encouraged by the authorities.

Measurement by the Government of Aruba

These measurements are valid until Friday April 23, 2021. On a daily basis rules and protocols are being evaluated and changes are being informed by the Government of Aruba in due time.

- Curfew is from 11pm to 5am.
- Closing time for businesses is 10pm.
- Max four (4) per table (indoors & outdoors) (excluding children under the age of 12) Tables must be at least 1.5 meters apart.
- During live performance 3 musicians are allowed to perform on stage.
- No musical events that are intended to attract customers.
- Background music is allowed/No dancing.
- Hotels and lodgings are exempted from the closing time, BUT only to serve their registered guests between 11pm and 5am.
- Casinos are not part of the exemption and must close at 10pm.

download the Aruba Department of Public Health's Aruba Health App: A mobile resource for information on COVID-19 health procedures in Aruba, facilitation of the airport health screening, and faster results for Molecular PCR COVID-19 tests taken in Aruba. A flat premium fee of \$30 is applicable for new insurance policies for travelers over 14 years old.

Effective January 26th, 2021, as announced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. government requires all international airline passengers to show proof of a negative, PCR or Antigen, Covid-19 test before boarding flights to the United States.

More information on travel and health requirements can be found on www.aruba.com. □



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Horacio Oduber Hospital <https://www.aruba-hospital.com/> – service-center@hoharuba.com (+297) 597-4522 (Call or WhatsApp)

Travel info:

Prior to travel, visitors should

E.U. accuses Apple of antitrust breach after Spotify complaint

By KELVIN CHAN

LONDON (AP) — European Union regulators accused Apple on Friday of violating the bloc's antitrust laws, alleging the iPhone maker distorts competition for music streaming by imposing unfair rules for rival services in its App Store.

The EU's executive Commission said it objected to Apple's rules for music streaming services that compete with its Apple Music service, saying they end up costing consumers more and limiting their choices.

The charges underscore the long-running feud over app payments between Apple and popular music streaming service Spotify, which filed a complaint that sparked the investigation - one of four the company is facing from the EU. Regulators in Brussels are also investigating other big U.S. tech companies like Amazon and Google, amid a growing global movement to rein in their power. The EU's competition commissioner, Margrethe Vestager, outlined two main concerns. One centers on Apple's practice of forcing



In this Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 file photo, European Commissioner for Europe fit for the Digital Age Margrethe Vestager speaks during a news conference on European project in battery value chain at the European Commission headquarters in Brussels.

Associated Press

ing app developers selling digital content to use its in-house payment system, which charges a 30% commission on all subscriptions. The other concern is that Apple prevents app makers from telling users about cheaper ways to pay for subscriptions that don't in-

volve going through an app.

Apple rejected the charges, saying it was proud of its role in helping Spotify grow into a music streaming giant. The company also pointed out Spotify doesn't pay Apple a commission for 99% of its paid subscrib-

ers.

"Once again, they want all the benefits of the App Store but don't think they should have to pay anything for that," Apple said in a statement. "The Commission's argument on Spotify's behalf is the opposite of fair competition."

Vestager said while Spotify had grown despite the restrictions, they were hurting business for smaller music streaming players like Deezer and Soundcloud.

The App Store rules are an issue beyond just music streaming services because many other app makers depend on it as a "gatekeeper" to iPhones and iPads, Vestager said.

"This significant market power cannot go unchecked as the conditions of access to the Apple App Store are key for the success of app developers," she told reporters in Brussels.

Vestager noted that Apple Music isn't subject to the same rules, which hurts rivals by raising their costs, reducing their profit margins and making them less attractive on the App Store. She said the problem is not the fee itself, but that Apple only charges it on payments for digital content and not other services such as transport or food deliveries. The EU's investigation found it typically pushed up the price of a monthly subscription to 12.99 euros (\$15.70) from 9.99 euros, she said. □

Maine seaweed growers to break state records this spring

By PATRICK WHITTLE

Associated Press

FALMOUTH, Maine (AP) — Maine's seaweed farmers are in the midst of a spring harvest that is almost certain to break state records. America's seaweed farming industry is based principally in Maine, where the business has grown swiftly over the past several years. Atlantic Sea Farms, a Saco company that works with two dozen seaweed farmers, said it's likely to harvest more than 800,000 pounds (360,000 kilograms) of the gooey substance this year.

Atlantic Sea Farms accounts for most of the state's seaweed aquaculture, and it harvested about 450,000 pounds (204,000 kilograms) in 2020. That was a record at the time, as the entire state accounted for 275,000 pounds (125,000 kilograms) in 2019. Maine Department of Marine Re-

sources statistics show.

The seaweed harvest has grown during the coronavirus pandemic because of increased demand for healthy foods, members of the industry said. Seaweed is touted as a health food by foodies, in part because it's high in fiber.

"We're looking at somewhere between 800,000 and 850,000 pounds of kelp. It's a lot," said Jesse Baines, marketing director for Atlantic Sea Farms. "Every once in a while we shake our heads and say — this is a lot."

The seaweed farmers who work with Atlantic Sea Farms grow their crops up and down the Maine coast and typically bring them in to shore in the spring months, typically ending in June.

The seaweed is processed into products that are sold at health food stores, super-

markets, seafood counters and restaurants. Products range from smoothie cubes made of kelp to seaweed salads.

The industry is restricted by a lack of processing capacity, said Tollef Olson, a past president of the Maine Seaweed Council and a consultant to the industry. The huge spring harvest this year could actually lead to backups in production, he said.

Atlantic Sea Farms, however, which represents the vast majority of the seaweed harvest in the state, is not suffering from production backups, Baines said. Every blade of seaweed that's coming to shore this spring will be processed, she said.

Olson said he's working on developing seaweeds that can be harvested at different times of the year. In the meantime, though, this



Seaweed farmers David Leith, left, and Stewart Hunt haul in a line of kelp for harvesting, Thursday, April 29, 2021, off the coast of Cumberland, Maine.

Associated Press

year's big harvest is encouraging, he said.

"I'm working really hard to get some year-round seaweeds going," Olson said. "That's been one of the bottlenecks in production — everything comes new at once."

Maine is also home to a wild harvest of rockweed. That is a kind of seaweed used in livestock feeds and fertilizers. Wild harvesters typically bring in 14 to 20 million pounds (6,350,000 to 9 million kilograms) of rockweed in a year. □

AP analysis: The expected COVID baby boom may be a baby bust



In this Monday, April 13, 2020 file photo, a couple walks alone in a Kansas City, Mo., park at sunset as stay-at-home orders continue in much of the country in an effort to stem the spread of the new coronavirus.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When most of the U.S. went into lockdown over a year ago, some speculated that confining couples to their homes — with little to entertain them beyond Netflix — would lead to a lot of baby-making. But the statistics suggest the opposite happened.

Births have fallen dramatically in many states during the coronavirus outbreak, according to an Associated Press analysis of preliminary data from half the country.

The COVID-19 baby boom appears to be a baby bust. Nationally, even before the epidemic, the number of babies born in the U.S. was falling, dropping by less than 1% a year over the past decade as many women postponed motherhood and had smaller families.

But data from 25 states suggests a much steeper decline in 2020 and into 2021, as the virus upended society and killed over a half-million Americans.

Births for all of 2020 were down 4.3% from 2019, the data indicates. More tellingly, births in December 2020 and in January and February 2021 — nine months or more after the spring 2020 lockdowns — were down 6.5%, 9.3% and 10% respectively, compared with the same months a year earlier. December, January and February together had about 41,000 fewer births than the same three-month span a year earlier. That's an 8% decline.

"When there's a crisis, I don't think people are thinking about reproduction," said Dr. John Santelli, a Columbia University professor of population and family

health who reviewed the AP's analysis.

The analysis included 24 states that provided data on births to residents. Joining them in the analysis was California, the most populous state, which provided data on all births that happened in the state, including among visitors.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is expected to provide a national picture later this year. But the data for the 25 states is not expected to change substantially; preliminary birth numbers usually end up being pretty close to the final counts, experts say.

The AP's findings echo projections by researchers at the Brookings Institution and elsewhere, who have predicted a sizable drop in births this year.

"The widespread consent-

sus is there is going to be a decline," said Hans-Peter Kohler, a University of Pennsylvania researcher who focuses on fertility and health. It didn't look that way to some around March 2020, when much of America was cooped up inside. Some figured that couples had more time together and that some men and women might find it harder to run out and get birth control, leading to at least a small uptick in births.

For Bryan and Katie Basamanowicz, it was more complicated than that.

The couple had planned to try to have a baby last summer to provide their son, Simon, with a younger sibling, but then came COVID-19 and the lockdown. For a time "it was so intense and scary" that the couple thought they would have to put off trying to conceive, said Bryan, 39, a managing editor at a small publishing house who lives in Ventura, California.

But then a lull occurred in the early summer, as the first wave of COVID-19 illnesses waned and lockdowns were eased. The couple decided to try after

all. Then cases started surging again.

"We decided: 'Let's put this on hold,'" said Katie, a 32-year-old teacher. But it turned out to be too late: A pregnancy test came back positive in early July. "We were already pregnant," she said.

Fritz Basamanowicz was born last month, on March 6. The pregnancy was a worry-filled experience because expectant mothers run a greater risk of severe illness from the virus.

"I'm very thankful that we made it through," Katie said.

New York, the deadly epicenter of the U.S. outbreak in the spring of 2020, was not part of the analysis. Its Health Department said the figures were not available.

A majority of the babies born in 2020 were, of course, conceived in 2019, before the virus took hold in the U.S., so the numbers partly reflect the pre-existing downward trend.

But births in December 2020 declined in 23 of the 25 states from the same month a year earlier, the exceptions being Alaska and Wyoming. They dropped about 11% in Massachusetts and Virginia; 10% in California; and 7% in Florida, Illinois, Indiana and Nevada.

Declines were even more dramatic in January 2021 in many of the 25 states.

Still, Emily Newell, 31, who lives in Portland, Maine, with her husband, Ben Keller, said she witnessed the opposite phenomenon during the outbreak: "We know so many people who decided to have kids."

The couple married in January 2020 and were eventually forced to work from home. They saw a certain appeal in going through a pregnancy with both partners at home, said Newell, a 31-year-old assistant professor of sports management at the University of Southern Maine.

"It gives us a little more flexibility in terms of care" for the baby, she said.

Their son, Manuel, was born two months ago. □

Baidu rolls out paid driverless taxi service in Beijing

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese tech giant Baidu rolled out its paid driverless taxi service on Sunday, making it the first company to commercialize autonomous driving operations in China. Unlike previous Baidu autonomous driving demonstrations in Beijing, this was the first time there was no safety driver sitting behind the wheel. Instead, a safety member was seated in the front passenger seat to deal with any emergencies.

Up to 10 Apollo "robotaxis" are now operating simultaneously in an area of about 3 square kilometers (1.2 square miles), picking up and dropping off passengers at eight stops in Shougang Park in western Beijing. Each ride costs 30 yuan (\$4.60), and is open to passengers ages 18 to 60. The park is a former site of iron and steel plants that's been redeveloped into a sightseeing destination and a future venue for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. Although traffic flows aren't heavy, an influx of tourists was seen in the park on the second day of China's international labor day holiday. The robotaxis were repeatedly forced to brake when encountering jaywalkers or curious tourists who came close to the vehicles for photos.

Kelly Wang and her husband, who both work in the artificial intelligence industry, said they had a smooth riding experience.

"I would recommend people experience this. There is a strong sense of technology, because nobody is

in the driver's seat," Wang said. Her husband was even considering buying such a car for their household.

Passengers can order a robotaxi on an app called Apollo Go. When the taxi arrives, passengers must have their identities verified before getting in. The taxi will start to move after it detects the passengers have fastened their seat belts. One visitor, Amy Li, still had concerns about autonomous driving, because driving behavior on the road can be complex.

"We've all had experiences



Baidu Apollo Robotaxis move on a street at the Shougang Park in Beijing, Sunday, May 2, 2021.

Associated Press

such as other cars jumping the queue or making a sudden lane change. People have emotions while robots don't, at least at present," she said. "The robots may not be able to deal with such changes."

Baidu, known for its search

engines, has been testing autonomous driving on the open road since last year. □

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

8			4	9			6
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3		2	6	5			7
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	8		9		4		
5	9				7		3
9		7	1	8			5
7		3		4			8

Difficulty Level ★

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5/03



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Celebrity politicians test voter interest in post-Trump era

By JILL COLVIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — From Ronald Reagan and Arnold Schwarzenegger to Al Franken and Donald Trump, there's a rich history of celebrities trying out new careers in politics.

The list could soon grow. In California, former Olympian Caitlyn Jenner is running for governor. In Texas, Oscar-winning actor Matthew McConaughey has said he is considering a run for governor. In New York City, Andrew Yang, a businessman who gained fame during his quixotic 2020 presidential run, is a leading contender for the Democratic mayoral nomination.

Each has the type of name recognition that other political newcomers would envy. But as they consider running some of the nation's largest and most complicated governments, their lack of experience in public office could be a vulnerability. That's especially true after the tumult of the Trump era, when the reality television star-turned-president often spent more time raging about his media coverage than managing the federal bureaucracy.

"I do think it definitely makes it slightly harder," said Daniel Ketchell, who was chief of staff to Schwarzenegger, the bodybuilder-turned-Hollywood star who won a California recall election in 2003 and became a two-term governor. "I think people are looking at you and that narrative of: We just elected an outsider celebrity and it didn't work out for the country, we didn't get much done for the country, we all were stressed out all the time."

Jenner, a gold medal-winning decathlete and transgender rights activists perhaps best known for being part of the Kardashian family, launched her campaign last week challenging Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom in his likely recall race. Bolstered by her 3.5 million Twitter followers and nearly 11 million on Instagram, the Jenner



In this Jan. 18, 2020, file photo, Caitlyn Jenner speaks at the 4th Women's March in Los Angeles. Former Olympian Jenner is running for governor of California.

Associated Press

campaign believes that name recognition — will make her a strong competitor in a race they see as a referendum on Newsom's leadership.

But Rob Stutzman, a GOP consultant in the state who advised Schwarzenegger's winning recall campaign, said there are key differences between Jenner and Schwarzenegger, who was then arguably the biggest movie star in the world. "There's famous and then there's Arnold Schwarzenegger famous," he said, rejecting the idea that Trump had turned voters against celebrities.

"People will say they don't like celebrity candidates until there's a celebrity candidate they like," he said. "A lot of Democrats hated Donald Trump, but they might be pretty enthralled with Matthew McConaughey. ... It's still about winning and likability."

Much else is also different this time around.

California has grown even more Democratic over the past 20 years, making it harder for a Republican, especially one who openly backed Trump, to gain traction.

Schwarzenegger, strategists note, was already well known in the state as a champion of after-school

programs, and had a history of civic engagement, having served as chair of President George H.W. Bush's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. It also didn't hurt that he was married to Maria Shriver, a member of the Kennedy family dynasty.

Reagan was also well versed in politics before running a campaign of his own by virtue of leading the Screen Actors Guild. While Jenner has advocated for transgender people since coming out in 2015 and experience in the business world, it is unclear where she stands on a slew of other policy questions. Indeed, her current website offers only a vague 68-word statement, along with a fundraising portal and online store selling stemless wine glasses and yard signs. (Her campaign says policy plans are coming soon.)

She has already faced backlash after mistakenly suggesting in a tweet that district attorneys in the state were appointed, not elected. (She later said she knew that was the case.)

"Also, do you know how a bill becomes a law?" quipped Rep. Ted Lieu, D-Calif., offering a link to the famous "Schoolhouse Rock" animation. "Do you know what 'veto' means?

Or 'budget'?"

Celebrities-turned-politicians have long recognized the extra work they must do to counteract a dearth of governing experience. When Schwarzenegger ran, aides created what they called "Schwarzenegger University" to get up to speed on issues. Franken, the "Saturday Night Live" star who later became a Democratic senator from Minnesota, largely avoided the national press during his first years in office as he tried to redefine himself as a serious lawmaker. Jesse Ventura, the professional wrestler who became Minnesota's governor, surrounded himself with experienced aides.

"No question that there was, I think, a preconceived notion that he might have some trouble engaging others to his administration," John Wodele, who served as Ventura's spokesman in office. "However, the actions that he took right after the election to bring people into his administration with experience and knowledge and impeccable reputations quickly dispelled that."

Wodele added: "I think coming out of the wrestling environment and celerity, a lot of people misjudged him in terms of his intellect. He was underestimated in

terms of his ability to understand and reason."

In New York, Yang has ridden his losing presidential bid to a leading slot in the crowded mayoral race, which some of his rivals have sought to turn against him.

In his first ad of the race, City Comptroller Scott Stringer, who has faced calls to drop out after a former volunteer accused him of sexual misconduct, stressed his experience in an implicit slap at Yang. "He's not a celebrity. He doesn't govern by Tweet or TikTok," the Stringer ad began.

Yang's campaign manager, Chris Coffey, rejected the characterization of the candidate as a celebrity, comparing Yang instead with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the Democratic congresswoman from New York who has become a household name because of her progressive politics.

"There's a pretty big difference between starting a reality show and starting a political movement based on raising people out of poverty and giving people cash," Coffey said of Yang. But star power, argued Democratic strategist Hank Sheinkopf, is what voters want.

"We live in a culture of gossip and entertainment. That's how Trump became president. That's one of the reasons why Yang is at the front of the pack," said Democratic strategist Hank Sheinkopf. He said that with New York having gone through so much during the pandemic, many voters may simply long for a smiling face and a cheerleader.

"The city, like other cities, is in the dumps," Sheinkopf said. "With his celebrity, he's interesting." □

8	7	2	4	3	9	1	5	6
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9	2	4	7	1	8	6	3	5
1	8	3	9	5	6	2	7	4
7	5	6	3	2	4	9	1	8

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Difficulty Level ★ 5/03

Baffert mulling Medina Spirit's next step after Derby win

By GARY B. GRAVES

AP Sports Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Medina Spirit's surprising Kentucky Derby victory gave Bob Baffert a good problem to have — figuring out where to hang another sign on his barn's already crowded wall of glory. As the Hall of Fame trainer digests a record seventh Derby win that caught even him off guard, he and the horse's connections must determine whether the dark brown colt will turn around quickly for the 146th Preakness on May 15 in Baltimore, where a collection of rested horses and revenge-minded competitors await.

"He came out of it well," Baffert said Sunday morning at Churchill Downs. "It takes about a week to determine, so I'm going to come back next weekend and see. I don't see anything that would discourage me right now."

Similar wait-and-see decisions loomed on the backside a day after the 147th Derby returned to its traditional first Saturday in May date. Shorter than the Derby at 1 3/16 miles, the Preakness sets up well for horses that skipped Churchill Downs for the sprint at Pimlico Race Course. Not to mention a chance for redemption for competitors that fell short to Medina Spirit.

Trainer Doug O'Neill said third-place finisher Rock Your World would not be among them, looking instead to run the 1 1/2-mile Belmont Stakes on June 5 in New York. Meanwhile, Brad Cox planned to talk with connections for runner-up Mandaloun and 5-2 Derby favorite Essential Quality, who finished fourth. Though disappointed not to win in his first Derby, the Louisville-born trainer was encouraged by both finishing in the top four of the 19-horse field.

After a head-scratching sixth in the Louisiana Derby, Mandaloun provided a pleasant surprise on Saturday by chasing Medina Spirit down the stretch before falling half a length short. Cox insisted Essential

Quality was the Derby's best horse and just created extra distance for himself in the turns trying to contend. "He ran a huge race, very proud of his effort, he and Mandaloun," Cox said. "He was fourth best at a mile and a quarter. He lost a lot of ground around both turns." Asked if he desired to run the Preakness, Cox said: "I have a desire if I feel like my horses are doing really well. I just really have to base it off of them."

Baffert might throw another one of his pupils into the Preakness mix. He preceded his availability with reporters by working a couple of horses including Concert Tour, who finished third in the Arkansas Derby. A decision by owners Gary and Mary West looms for the colt with three wins. □



John Velazquez riding Medina Spirit leads Florent Geroux on Mandaloun and Flavien Prat riding Hot Rod Charlie to win the 147th running of the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs, Saturday, May 1, 2021, in Louisville, Ky.

Associated Press

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Kluber gets 100th win, Yankees sweep Tigers to reach .500

By RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Corey Kluber was so good, he even smiled.

The right-hander handcuffed Detroit batters Sunday to earn his 100th career win with his most dominant performance since 2018. The pitcher nicknamed Klubot for his robot-like demeanor grinned when congratulated in the dugout after his final inning.

"I'm not the most vocal or most emotional person in the clubhouse," he explained after the Yankees' 2-0 victory, "but I wouldn't say that I don't ever have a good time."

A day after Jameson Taillon's first win in exactly two years, Kluber combined on a two-hitter that helped New York (14-14) complete its first series sweep this season and get back to .500 for the first time since the Yankees were 5-5.

Before last month, Kluber had pitched one inning since May 1, 2019, due to



New York Yankees starting pitcher Corey Kluber throws during the eighth inning of a baseball game against the Detroit Tigers at Yankee Stadium, Sunday, May 2, 2021, in New York.

Associated Press

a broken forearm when hit by a comebacker and a torn shoulder muscle. Kluber challenged himself "to kind of get back to maybe a level you expect of yourself."

"I tried to be realistic about

it, that it probably wasn't going to be just flip a switch and feel like I like to feel out there, I'm accustomed to feeling out there," he said. Kluber (2-2) looked like the pitcher who won AL Cy Young Awards with Cleve-

land in 2014 and 2017. He allowed two hits in eight innings, walked one and struck out 10 to reach double digits for the 47th time but first since Sept. 24, 2018. Kluber threw 74 of 103 pitches for strikes.

"When he's in the zone, it's kind of like — good luck," said catcher Kyle Higashio, who is gaining playing time from Gary Sánchez.

Kluber's fastball was "only" 91 mph but he induced 18 swinging strikes — 13 alone on 83-86 mph changeups that tamed a Tigers team that saw its season batting average dropped to a major league-worst .195.

Yankees manager Aaron Boone appreciates Kluber's reserved demeanor.

"Obviously, he's a little understated and quiet and methodical and workman-like and very routine-oriented," Boone said.

Kluber got 11 outs on grounders, two on infield popups and one on a lineout to second baseman Rougned Odor in short right field.

Detroit's only flyout was by Robbie Grossman leading off the ninth against Aroldis Chapman, who struck out his next two batters to remain perfect in six save chances. □

Phillies LHP Alvarado suspended 3 games for dustup with Mets



Philadelphia Phillies relief pitcher Jose Alvarado, right, has an altercation with New York Mets' Dominic Smith (2) as catcher Andrew Knapp tries to intervene after Smith struck out swinging in the eighth inning of a baseball game, Friday, April 30, 2021, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Philadelphia Phillies reliever José

Alvarado was suspended three games Sunday by Major League Baseball for inciting a bench-clearing dustup with the New York Mets.

Alvarado also was fined an undisclosed amount, as were Mets outfielder Dominic Smith and pitcher Miguel Castro for their roles in two heated exchanges Friday night in Philadelphia.

The announcement was made by Michael Hill, baseball's chief disciplinarian as Senior Vice President for On-Field Operations. Alvarado decided to appeal the penalty and will remain eligible to pitch un-

til the process is completed. The NL East rivals were scheduled to wrap up their three-game series Sunday night.

Alvarado struck out Smith to end a threat in the eighth inning Friday, then thumped his glove and pointed and shouted in Smith's direction. Tempers flared as Smith pulled off his helmet, Alvarado threw his glove to the ground and the two approached each other as the benches and bullpens emptied. Both players were restrained and no punches were thrown. Castro got lathered up later in the game after a

couple of inside pitches on a walk to Rhys Hoskins drew a direct look from the Philadelphia first baseman. Players spilled onto the field, halting the game for a bit, but teammates calmed down Castro and that was about it.

Philadelphia hung on for a 2-1 victory.

Back on April 13 in New York, Smith took exception to Alvarado throwing near the head of Mets slugger Michael Conforto and then hitting him with a subsequent pitch. Smith barked and gestured from the dugout at Alvarado, who waved his hand dismissively. □